

The events of yesterday dramatically point out the difference that a few seconds can make in whether Members will get to the Chamber successfully to represent their constituents on the important bills and amendments we vote on daily. As the Republican leadership insists on a 17-minute time frame for votes in order to expedite the business of the House, punctuality will remain very important.

I strongly oppose the gentleman's amendment, and I urge my colleagues to let their common sense overcome this crude attempt to engage in the politics of sound-bites and political expediency.

## CONGRESSIONAL REFORM

### HON. LEE H. HAMILTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 28, 1995*

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to insert my Washington Report for Wednesday, June 28, 1995 into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD:

#### REFORMING CONGRESS

Last week the House passed its version of the 1996 funding bill for Congress. Overall funding for the House would be cut 8% from the 1995 level. Congress must take the lead in fiscal discipline. This bill is a step in the right direction.

The bill also includes several worthwhile reforms of the operations of Congress. It cuts funding for committee staff, cuts Members' mail allowances, and eliminates a congressional committee. It also cuts back congressional support agencies. The Office of Technology Assessment, the Government Printing Office, and the General Accounting Office all would be downsized.

These are all worthwhile reforms, and they reflect Members' continuing efforts to streamline Congress and improve its operations. In my view, three broader changes could make the reform process better.

#### ALLOWING MORE AMENDMENTS

The floor amendment process needs to be more open. The House leadership prohibited several reform amendments to the congressional funding bill from being considered on the floor. Members wanted to offer amendments, for example, to eliminate additional committees and ban gifts from lobbyists. Of the 33 amendments that Members wanted to offer on the floor, only 11 were allowed. Most of the denied amendments called for additional reforms or deeper spending cuts.

Last session Members in the minority objected, with some justification, that many of their amendments were not allowed to be offered, and they promised that if they were ever in the majority the amendment process would be much more open. Yet the new leadership has made only modest progress toward more openness. The amendment process tends to be open on minor bills and restrained on controversial matters. Certainly on some difficult bills and amendment process cannot be totally open. But on such bills the leadership has to identify the major policy issues and allow a thorough and thoughtful consideration of them. We still have a long way to go to reach the goal of allowing Members to vote on the major reform issues of the day.

#### GREATER BIPARTISANSHIP

Another concern is the increasingly partisan nature of congressional reform. A bipartisan task force has been set up by the House

leadership to make recommendations on additional reforms, particularly further changes in committee jurisdictions.

Committee reform is an appropriate topic for review, but I am disappointed that the leadership has chosen not to make it a bipartisan task force. Last Congress we set up the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress in a bipartisan way, with an equal number of Members from both parties. Historically that has been the best way to achieve long-lasting institutional reform.

#### REGULARIZING REFORM

I also believe that we need to regularize the congressional reform process, taking up a major reform package each Congress.

One of my main conclusions from my work last Congress on the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress is that the institution is better served if congressional reform is treated more as an ongoing, continual process rather than something taken up in an omnibus way every few decades.

Congress has set up three major bipartisan, House-Senate reform efforts in recent times—the 1945, 1965, and 1993 Joint Committees on the Organization of Congress. All three committees were given extremely broad mandates—to look at virtually all aspects of Congress in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness. The Joint Committee in the last Congress took up everything from committee jurisdiction changes and the congressional budget process to ethics reform, House-Senate relations, and congressional compliance with the laws we pass for everyone else. We conducted scores of hearings, heard from hundreds of witnesses, looked over thousands of pages of testimony, considered hundreds of reform ideas, and issued reports totalling several thousand pages.

In my view, it would be far preferable to have the House take up a major congressional reform resolution each Congress. That would make the task much more manageable, since Members would be able to focus attention on the key issues of the day rather than the entire range of procedural and organizational matters carried over from previous Congresses. It would allow us to continually update the institutions of Congress in a rapidly changing world. Letting systematic institutional reform slide for several years only allows problems to fester and heightens partisan tensions.

I recently introduced a resolution requiring the Rules Committee to take up the issue of a congressional reform resolution each Congress. If the Committee decides against sending such a reform resolution to the House floor for consideration, they would have to explain—as part of a required end-of-Congress report—why they thought congressional reform was not needed.

Interest in congressional reform tends to ebb and flow according to the changing interests of the voters and the main House players in reform, the shifting national agenda, and the varying amounts of media coverage given to the operation of Congress. I believe we need to regularize the process so that whoever is in charge of reform in the future will be looking seriously at scheduling and debating a congressional reform resolution each Congress.

This is not a new idea. The Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 stated the need for a congressional panel to "make a continuing study of the organization and operation of the Congress". Moreover, the 1974 bipartisan House Select Committee on Committees stated that "a key aspect of any viable reorganization is provision for continuing evaluation of its effectiveness, and for periodic adjustments in the institution as new situations arise". It is time to finally follow

through on these recommendations and regularize the congressional reform process.

We have been making progress on reforming Congress. But pursuing reform in a more bipartisan, open, and regular way will make our efforts more productive.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE ULSTER PROJECT

### HON. MARTIN FROST

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 28, 1995*

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the Ulster project. For the second consecutive year, youths from Northern Ireland have come to Arlington, TX, to see and learn how individuals from different backgrounds can live together in peace.

The Ulster project is comprised of teenagers from Northern Ireland who travel to the United States for 1 month. Teenagers of both Protestant and Catholic faiths participate. Each Irish youth is placed in an Arlington family that shares similar interests. The goal of the program is to demonstrate to the Irish teenagers that people from different faiths and backgrounds can peacefully coexist. The ultimate goal is that they take the experiences that they have learned back home with them to Ireland.

Living in Arlington, TX, this summer are the following teenagers, listed with their hometown: Judith A. Conliffe, Belfast; David Laughlin, Newtonabbey; Andrew McCorriston, Belfast; Louise Morris, Belfast; Cherith McFarland, Newtonabbey; Peter Kelly, Bangor; Ashleigh Cochrane, Newtonabbey; Janine Swail, Belfast; Donna Smyth, Newtonabbey; Gareth Price, Bangor; Fiannuala Hanna, Belfast; Gavin Kyle, Glengormley; Stuart Hall, Belfast; Adrian Kidd, Newtonabbey; Neil McCabe, Belfast; Catherine Davidson, Belfast. Richard Hazley of Bangor and Regina Bradley of Belfast will be accompanying the teenagers as counselors.

Again, I commend this project as a genuine effort to help a country that has for too long been torn apart by war. Progress has been made in Ulster to bring about a peaceful solution. This program and ones like it can only serve as a shining example of what can happen if people work with one another to achieve mutual respect and understanding.

## RECOGNITION OF DR. GREG ROTH

### HON. CARLOS J. MOORHEAD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 28, 1995*

Mr. MOORHEAD. Mr. Speaker, selflessness is a cherished commodity in the era in which we live.

I rise today to recognize Dr. Greg Roth, executive pastor of my home church, Glendale (CA) Presbyterian. Dr. Roth is an individual who exemplifies this selflessness through his love and concern for others. We honor a man who through years of dedicated service to his church and his community, has earned a reputation for leadership, compassion, and generosity.

He, like others, envisions things which are for the betterment of our society. Yet, what